

Problems and Prospects in Afghanistan's Pharmaceutical Market



Working with World Health Organization (WHO) has brought a lot of perspectives and opened up a wider scope of realization regarding counterfeit medicines. [The Peterson Group's](#) - now an international non-profit organization campaigning against the proliferation of counterfeit medicines across nations - systematic review of the current situation of [fraudulence on drug distribution](#) among pharmacies and markets has broadened the problems encountered in counterfeiting.

One of the countries that are currently being plagued with fraud and substandard medicines is Afghanistan.

There has been a significant increase in the number of medicines in Afghanistan since 2002 as both donated and privately imported drugs were permitted to the country with the development of international trade among other nations. The country's health sector has since then improved, allowing even the lower income class to avail of the needed medicines.

Patterned from the process of other countries, Afghanistan has dual public and private medical supply. The public sector involves the procurement of medical provisions from the Ministry of Health and the International Donor Community while the private sector involves importers, distributors and pharmacies. The latter, however, is larger to the point of being overly supplied. This sector also caters to public markets including grocery stores and street vendors. From these, distribution of counterfeit medicines enters the scene.





One of the recurring problems of the Ministry of Health in the country is the instability of providing better quality health care. They do not meet international health standards and parts of the private sectors operate illegally and without proper license. Despite warnings of health hazards, street vendors continue selling [fraud medicines](#). The authorities, on the other hand, are unaware of the dangers of possible counterfeiting that they allow public market to get infested with medicines.

A lot of critics are convinced that corruption at customs opened up Afghanistan to counterfeiting. With thousands of distributions and exchange of hands happen in all parts of the country with a market, it is not easy – almost impossible even – for non-experts to distinguish between the good and bad products. Consumers are unaware, or possibly unconcerned, that their medicines are manufactured in China or Jakarta, Indonesia, two of the largest manufacturers of counterfeit medicines.

To make matters worse, upon reviewing medical regulations, it shows that there is no policy regarding registration of medical companies in Afghanistan, and no monitoring of companies in the provinces. Until now, licensing and political corruption continue to tolerate counterfeiting in the country.

